GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1629
ANSWERED ON:10.12.2008
INDIAN HOUSEHOLD SERVICE WORKERS ABROAD
Kharventhan Shri Salarapatty Kuppusamy

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated number of Indians working as Household Service Workers (HSW) in various countries abroad;

(b) whether bilateral labour welfare pacts have been signed between India and various other countries in which Indian HSWs are employed;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the incidents of exploitation of Indian women working as HSW abroad have come to the notice of the Government;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government to protect the exploitation of Indian workers abroad?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

(a) As per information furnished by Indian Missions in Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain,Qatar,Kuwait,UAE, Lebanon and Jordan,the approximate total number of Indian woman working as housemaids is about 1,70,000.

(b)&(c): This Ministry has signed bilateral MOUs with the UAE, Kuwait and Oman and additional protocol on the existing MoU with Qatar to ensure protection to emigrant workers. MOU with Malaysia and Bahrain have been finalized.Efforts are being made to sign MOUs with other labour receiving countries. These MOUs provide for a Joint Committee consisting of representatives of both countries to discuss and resolve grievances of workers.They also intend to strengthen cooperation in man-power development,facilitate mobilization and recruitment of man-power,exchange expertise and experience in all related areas, and lay down the terms and conditions as well as rights and duties of the employee.

(d) &(e): Instances of exploitation of Indian emigrant workers have come to the notice of the Government from time to time. The complaints received relate to various issues including instances of exploitation by recruitment agents. During the last two years, the number of complaints received are as under:

COMPLAINTS AGAINST UNREGISTERED RECRUITING AGENTS

Year	No.of complaints	Prosecution Cases Sanctions	referred to State Governments/ POEs for action
2006	78	21	57
2007	41	7	34
2008 (upto 30-11-08	87	59	87

COMPLAINTS AGAINST REGISTERED RECRUITING AGENTS

Year	No.of compl-aints	Show Cause Notices issued	No.of Regis-tration Certifi-cates	No.of complaints dropped/ resolved	Cases pending and being followed up

suspen-
ded/cancelled

2006 167 167 80 84 03
2007 98 94 12 66 20

2008 102 102 24 26 52
(30.11.08)

Besides the above, 345 foreign employers have been placed under prior approval category based on such complaints.

(f) With a view to protect the interests of the Indian workers abroad,the following steps have been taken: -

Attestation of employment documents by the Indian missions concerned in respect of six countries viz.Yemen,Lebanon,Libya,Jordan, Sudan and Kuwait for all categories of workers (skilled & unskilled) has been made mandatory whereas for vulnerable categories, i.e. housemaids/ domestic servants and unskilled labour, attestation of employment documents by the Indian missions has been made mandatory for all ECR countries.

All demands for 500 or more workers is verified for the genuineness of the demand as well as the Foreign Employer by the concerned Indian mission.

All demands from Recruiting Agents in the Watch List of the Ministry are attested by the Indian mission concerned before grant of clearance.

Protectors of Emigrants have been asked to conduct appropriate checks and exercise abundant caution while granting emigration clearance,while taking into account the extant instructions of the Ministry.

Special measures being taken for better protection and welfare of vulnerable sections of emigrants including women emigrants are:

1. Age restriction of 30 years for all women emigrating on ECR passports.

2. Opening of Overseas Indian Workers Resource Centre in host countries to serve as a one stop service outlet for addressing the information and assistance needs of emigrants.

3. A 24x7 helpline viz. Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) has been set up to enable emigrants/ prospective emigrants to seek information and file complaints against Recruiting Agents/ Foreign Employers.

A comprehensive insurance scheme,viz.Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana,2006,is in place, which makes it mandatory for every emigrant worker to be covered under the Scheme while seeking emigration clearance.The Scheme, inter-alia, provides workers with life insurance, medical expenses and legal expenses cover and also the deportation expenses wherever needed.With effect from 01.04.2008, the scheme has been upgraded by providing additional benefits at reduced premium rates.Workers now have life insurance coverage of Rs.10 lakhs (in place of Rs.5 lakhs), Medical Expenses coverage of Rs.75,000/- (in place of Rs.50,000/-),Family Hospitalization coverage of Rs.50,000/- (in place of Rs.25,000/-),Maternity Expenses coverage of Rs.25,000/- (in place of Rs.20,000/-),Legal Expenses coverage of Rs.30,000/- (in place of Rs.25,000/-) etc.The insurance premium has been reduced to Rs.275 for 2 years policy period and Rs.375 for 3 years policy period.

A vigorous campaign in the print and electronic media to educate potential emigrants including labourers and other vulnerable sections like women emigrants has been launched to propagate the benefits and hazards of legal and illegal migration respectively.